UNITY

CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT,

FOR

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION.

Series II. Chicago, Nov. 15 and Dec. 1, 1885. Nos. 12 and 13.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

PASSAGES FROM HIS WRITINGS, SELECTED BY W. C. GANNETT AND JUDSON FISHER.

CHANNING, THE MAN: A SKETCH - 2
READING-GUIDE TO CHANNING - - 3

PAGE.

A "MAN"—
The Worth of a Man - - - - 4
The Greatest Man - - - - - 5
"I call that mind free" - - - 5

HUMAN NATURE: THE SOUL—
"My one sublime idea" - - - 6
Traces of Divinity in Man - - 6
The Sense of Duty - - - - 7
The Soul in Sin - - - - 8
"Every human being" - - - 8
Slavery, Intemperance, War - - 8

IMMORTAL LIFE—
On What the Faith Rests - - - 8
Heaven - - - - - - 9
Hell - - - - - - - 9

WHAT IS RELIGION?—
Its Root, Aspiration for the Perfect - 10
Its Flower, our Perfection - - - 10
Love of God—Love of Goodness - 11
"A pious man" - - - - 11
"What, then, is Religion?" - - 11

THE IDEA OF GOD—
Its Source - - - - - 12
Conscience and the Idea of God - 12
The Moral God - - - - 12
An Immoral God - - - 13
God in Nature - - - - 13

COMMUNION WITH GOD—
"The divinity growing within us" - 14
"From inspiration?" - - - 15
Prayer - - - - - - 15
Our Father who art within - - - 15

PAGE.

The Soul's Peace - - - 16
In Church - - - - - 16

JESUS—
"I love him for ——" - - - 17
What Jesus Saw in Man - - 17
Imitableness of Christ - - - 17
The Cross of Christ - - - 17
"The Great Emancipator" - - 17

FREEDOM AND FELLOWSHIP IN RELIGION—
Reason in Religion - - - 18
Creeds - - - - - - 18
Sectarianism - - - - 19
"The grand heresy" - - - 19
"Unitarianism" - - - - 19
The True Unity - - - - 20
The Church Universal - - - 20

THE REFORMER AND HIS METHODS—
Victory that Lasts - - - - 21
Expel Error by Instilling Truth - 21
Truth-Sowing - - - - 21
Quietly, Steadily - - - 21
No Evil that Good may Come - - 21
A Time to Dare - - - - 22
Unflinching, Calm - - - - 22
"Fear no man" - - - - 22
Self-exposure and Self-surrender - - 22
The Allies - - - - - 22

THE FUTURE—
The Revolution Needed - - - 23
Brotherhood of the New Love - 23
"We live in glorious times" - - 23
The Prophecy - - - - 23

Channing, the Man.

William Ellery Channing was born at Newport, R. I., in 1780, graduated at Harvard College in 1798, and at the age of twenty-three became minister of the Federal street Congregational church in Boston. The young preacher quickly grew popular. Within six years the little society had to build a large new church; a dozen years more and he was *the* Boston preacher,—"delicate of frame, but *of a great presence*", with "a voice thrilling one as if it issued from the inmost depths of the spirit". Yet no anecdotes, no quotations, no illustrations even, made the sermons so attractive. They were sermons in one color,—sermons from the Soul, of the Soul, to the Soul; sermons of "the Perfect Life", "the Life of God in the Soul of Man". It was the man in the sermons that was the illustration.

When he went to Boston there was no such thing as a Unitarian sect in America. The old Congregationalism of New England's forefathers still remained unbroken. But for fifty years, around Harvard college as a centre, beliefs had been slowly and quietly broadening; and the Boston ministers were now the leaders of a "Liberal" party, whose two watchwords were "Few Fundamentals" and "the Right of Free Inquiry in Religion". The Calvinism had faded nearly all out from their views of human nature, while about the Trinity and the Atonement minds were changing but not yet made up. During the next few years the Orthodox, naturally alarmed, grew restless and aggressive; which made the Liberals more and more pronounced. At last the storm broke. It was 1815. "Unitarians and hypocrites!" was the Orthodox charge. Channing promptly answered the attack. Speaking out as defender of liberty he found himself suddenly in the front as defender of a faith. The papers that he wrote about it—scarcely more than eight or ten, all told—were so calm and clear, so strong and bold, that he became the recognized apostle of the "Unitarian movement". The war of texts and pamphlets and the parish controversies lasted some fifteen years; the Church of the forefathers broke in two; the new name "Unitarianism" was accepted and defined; and the young sect organized itself apart. In Massachusetts the best minds and the social leaders were with the Liberals. But it was scarcely more than a Massachusetts reformation; beyond that state the new name was only known as name of dread and obloquy.

Channing cared much for the movement, very little for the organization. Anti-trinitarianism was the least thing in his mind. Anti-Calvinism was more important, for that meant faith that God is really good. Under all his doctrines was his reverence for the human Soul and the Soul's freedom; it was a *spiritual anti-slavery conflict* that he led. He denied in order to affirm; and in no sense was a sectarian. "I take cheerfully", he said, "the name of a Unitarian. But were the name more honored, I should be glad to throw it off. I wish to regard myself as belonging not to a sect, but to the community of free minds, of lovers of truth, of followers of Christ, both on earth and in heaven."

Meanwhile the preacher, whose best health was but half-health, had visited Europe, and had had to ask his people for a colleague (1824). From this time on he gradually withdrew from work in the pulpit to work at the writing-desk, and spent long months of the year in necessary quiet at Newport. More than ever it became a sheltered thinker's uneventful life. Yet he wrote, "I need several lives to do what I feel I have to do"; and, invalid as he was, he embraced three successful careers in his one life. The preacher and pastor in his early ministry, the religious reformer in his middle years, now in the later years he became the social reformer, a private statesman of the "Higher Law", devoting his time largely to the writing of essays on the elevation of the laboring classes and against slavery. Though never wholly inside the Abolition party,—for here again he feared the bonds of sect,—his clear, strong reasonableness ranked him early among the leaders of their movement. The nation and the world began to listen to him now. "With scarce body enough to anchor his soul to

earth", his spirit grew younger and more radiant as he worked. "You seem to be the only young man I know", said one, catching his enthusiasm over the result of the "Three Days" in Paris (1830): "Always young for liberty, I trust!" was his reply.

Underlying all he wrote on brotherhood, the secret of his boundless hope for man was still his "one sublime idea, the greatness of the soul, its divinity, its union with God by spiritual likeness". This in contrast with the Calvinist's "depravity" of human nature. In that one idea he finds the ground of education, of religion, of faith in immortality, of human freedom and brotherhood, of the hope of a kingdom of heaven on earth. "What, then, is Religion?" he asks: "The expansion and most perfect form of the moral faculty of man." "The true love of God is the same thing with the love of virtue, rectitude and goodness." "The grand heresy is to substitute anything, whether creed or form or church, for character, . . for goodness, which is essentially, everlastingly, and by its own nature lovely, glorious, divine." "Our ultimate reliance is and must be on our own reason. I am surer that my rational nature is from God than that any book is an expression of his will." "All minds"—the Father, Jesus, men—"are of one family." "The ground of love to Christ is his spotless purity, his moral perfection, his unrivalled goodness." "To exalt human nature and to save man from sin, not from its punishment, was the purpose of Christ's work on earth." "A new reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood and of all men's relation to a common Father,—before this all oppressions are to fall."

The talk one summer day in 1842 fell on the question, which period in life is happiest; they turned to him; he smiled and said *he* thought it "about sixty". That fall he died among the hills, the light of a sun just set upon his face. His last words, caught by a friend, were, "I have received many messages from the Spirit."

Now the "messages" are read in many languages, and he is widely recognized by differing Churches as one who taught the central faiths of religion,—a prophet speaking for the Soul of Man.

What was the message? The following selections show. They contain the great characteristic ideas of Channing, the affirmations which he most emphasized himself, and which ally him most closely with the Unitarians of to-day and the higher religiousness of all days. But what is sometimes called "Channing Unitarianism" means, in addition to these ideas, certain historic beliefs about the Bible, Jesus, Christianity and Miracles, which he shared with all the fathers of Unitarianism. Central in their view of God's dealings with the world stood, as a glorious beneficent fact, the "Revelation" of Christianity, in itself, in its circumstances, in its Christ, a *miracle*. We have not sought to illustrate these traditional beliefs, save as they enter here and there the quoted passages. Even in Channing's own mind they were changing,—changing faster than with many of his followers; and since his day they have largely dimmed or vanished. Meanwhile, as steadily, Channing's more essential principles and faiths have everywhere been passing to the front. The dignity of human nature, the rights of reason in religion, the supremacy of character—abide, these three, and grow from more to more. Read Theodore Parker, Emerson and Martineau to find Channing *in continuance*. Read Liberal Orthodoxy to find him *in diffusion*.

Reading-Guide to Channing.

A one-volume Life of Channing is published by the American Unitarian Association (7 Tremont place, Boston), for $1.00. Also a one-volume and one-dollar edition of his Works, containing all except the twelve sermons called "The Perfect Life", printed separately for $1.50.

A Sunday-school manual called "Channing and the Unitarian Movement in America" is published by the Western S. S. Society, (135 Wabash ave., Chicago,) for 15 cents: it is a little study of Unitarian history and doctrine, centered round the life of Channing, and contain-

ing many conversation-hints and many references to noble passages in his writings. At the same place, also, a short tract called "Channing, the Man and his Message": it contains the sketch printed above, with additions, mainly autobiographical: price, 60 cents a hundred copies.

Our sketch above shows Channing as (1) the preacher, (2) the religious reformer, (3) the social reformer. To hear the *preacher* at his best one may read in the "Works",—

"Likeness to God".

"Imitableness of Christ's Character".

"Love to Christ (I)".

"Honor Due to All Men".

"The Great Purpose of Christianity".

"Christian Worship".

"The Charge at Dwight's Ordination",—this to learn Channing's lofty ideals of the preacher's work and methods.—And in "The Perfect Life" volume read—

"The Religious Principle in Human Nature".

"God Revealed in the Universe and in Humanity".

To see the *religious reformer*, read—

"Introductory Remarks".

"Unitarian Christianity",—the Baltimore sermon, which startled the country in 1819, and brought on the great debates.

"The Moral Argument against Calvinism".

"Letter on Creeds".

"Self-Denial (I)".

"Christianity a Rational Religion".

"Spiritual Freedom".

For his work as a *social reformer*, read—

"Self-Culture".

"On the Elevation of the Laboring Classes".

"Slavery".

Also read the essays on Napoleon Bonaparte and Fenelon,—the latter an "unconscious portrait" of himself, says his biographer.

THE REFERENCES BELOW.

L. means the one-volume Life of Channing.
W. means the one-volume Works of Channing.
P. L. means the volume of sermons called "The Perfect Life". All three books are mentioned above.

The references will be often found to open into large and noble passages on the subject of the selection.

A "MAN".

THE WORTH OF A MAN.

A free being; created to act from a spring in his own breast, to form himself and to decide his own destiny; connected intimately with nature, but not enslaved to it; connected still more strongly with God, yet not enslaved even to the Divinity, but having power to render or withhold the service due to his Creator; encompassed by a thousand warring forces, by physical elements which inflict pleasure and pain, by dangers seen and unseen, by the influences of a tempting, sinful world, yet endued by God with power to contend with all, to perfect himself by conflict with the very forces which threaten to overwhelm him. Such is the idea of a man. *W.* 48.

Few men know as yet, what a man is. They know his clothes, his complexion, his property, his rank, his outward life; but the thought of his inward being, his proper humanity has hardly dawned on multitudes. . . . A man is great as a man, be he where or what he may. . . . Man is a greater name than President or King. . . .

It is the man who determines the dignity of the occupation, not the occupation which measures the dignity of the man. . . . I know of but one elevation of a human being, and that is elevation of soul. Without this it matters nothing where a man stands or what he possesses; and with it he towers, he is one of God's nobility, no matter what place he holds in

the social scale. . . . No outward lot is degraded but that into which a man falls by vice; and on this principle affluence is as often a degraded condition as poverty, for as many grow rich as grow poor by guilt. . . . Nothing can injure us but unfaithfulness to ourselves, but the want of a just awe of our own minds.

W. 48, 12, 20, 33, 42.—*L.* 480, 612.

THE GREATEST MAN.

The greatest man is he who chooses the Right with invincible resolution, who resists the sorest temptations from within and without, who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully, who is calmest in storms and most fearless under menace and frowns, whose reliance on truth, on virtue, on God, is most unfaltering.

W. 13.

When I see a man holding faster his uprightness in proportion as it is assailed, fortifying his religious trust in proportion as Providence is obscure, hoping in the ultimate triumphs of virtue more surely in proportion to its present afflictions; cherishing philanthropy amidst the discouraging experience of men's unkindness and unthankfulness; extending to others a sympathy which his own sufferings need but cannot obtain; growing milder and gentler amidst what tends to exasperate and harden; and through inward principle converting the very incitements to evil into the occasions of a victorious virtue,—I see an explanation, and a noble explanation, of the present state. I see a good produced so transcendent in its nature as to justify all the evil and suffering under which it grows up. I should think the formation of a few such minds worth all the apparatus of the present world.

W. 346.

The true greatness of human life is almost wholly out of sight. Perhaps in our presence, the most heroic deed on earth is done in some silent spirit, the loftiest purpose cherished, the most generous sacrifice made, and we do not suspect it. I believe this greatness to be most common among the multitude, whose names are never heard. Among common people will be found more of hardship borne manfully, more of unvarnished truth, more of religious trust, more of that generosity which gives what the giver needs himself, and more of a wise estimate of life and death, than among the more prosperous.

W. 13.

"I CALL THAT MIND FREE."

I call that mind free which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognizes its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

I call that mind free which . . . resists the bondage of habit, which does not content itself with a passive or hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself, . . listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions.

I call that mind free which sets no bounds to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself or in a sect, which recognizes in all human beings the image of God and the rights of his children, . . . which conquers pride, anger and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles which it has deliberately espoused.

I call that mind free which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cower to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects a higher law than fashion, which respects itself too much to be the slave or tool of the many or the few, . . . which guards its empire over itself as nobler than the empire of the world.

I call that mind free which, through confidence in God and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrong-doing, which no menace or peril can enthral, which is calm in the midst of tumults, and possesses itself though all else be lost.

In fine, I call that mind free which, conscious of its affinity with God, and confiding in his promises by Jesus Christ, devotes itself faithfully to the unfolding of all its powers, which passes the bounds of time and death, which hopes to advance for ever, and which finds inexhaustible power, both for action and suffering, in the prospect of immortality.

W. 174.

Human Nature : The Soul.

"My one sublime idea."

One sublime idea has taken strong hold of my mind. It is, the greatness of the soul, its divinity, its union with God,— not by passive dependence, but by spiritual likeness, — its receptiveness of his spirit, its self-forming power, its destination to ineffable glory, its immortality. This great view binds together all other truth.

L. 445.

Traces of Divinity in Man.

I cannot but pity the man who recognizes nothing godlike in his own nature. I see the marks of God in the heavens and the earth, but how much more in a liberal intellect, in magnanimity, in unconquerable rectitude, in a philanthropy which forgives every wrong, and which never despairs of the cause of Christ and human virtue. I do and I must reverence human nature. Neither the sneers of a worldly scepticism, nor the groans of a gloomy theology, disturb my faith in its godlike powers and tendencies. I know how it is despised, how it has been oppressed, how civil and religious establishments have for ages conspired to crush it. I know its history. I shut my eyes on none of its weaknesses and crimes. I understand the proofs by which despotism demonstrates that man is a wild beast, in want of a master, and only safe in chains. But injured, trampled on, and scorned as our nature is, I still turn to it with intense sympathy and strong hope. The signatures of its origin and its end are impressed too deeply to be ever wholly effaced. I bless it for its kind affections, for its strong and tender love. I honor it for its struggles against oppression, for its growth and progress under the weight of so many chains and prejudices, for its achievements in science and art, and still more for its examples of heroic and saintly virtue. These are marks of a divine origin and the pledges of a celestial inheritance.

W. 298.

The greatness of the soul is especially seen in the intellectual energy which discerns absolute, universal truth, in the idea of God, in freedom of will and moral power, in disinterestedness and self-sacrifice, in the boundlessness of love, in aspirations after perfection, in desires and affections which time and space cannot confine and the world cannot fill. The soul, viewed in these lights, should fill us with awe. It is an immortal germ, which may be said to contain now within itself what endless ages are to unfold. It is truly an image of the infinity of God.

W. 1.

Am I asked for my conception of the dignity of a human being? I should say, that it consists, first, in that spiritual principle, called sometimes the Reason, sometimes the Conscience, which, rising above what is local and temporary, discerns immutable truth and everlasting right; which, in the midst of imperfect things, conceives of Perfection; which is universal and im-

partial, standing in direct opposition to the partial, selfish principles of human nature; which says to me with authority, that my neighbor is as precious as myself, and his rights as sacred as my own; which commands me to receive all truth, however it may war with my pride, and to do all justice, however it may conflict with my interest; and which calls me to rejoice with love in all that is beautiful, good. holy, happy, in whatever being these attributes may be found. This principle is a ray of Divinity in man.

W. 48.

THE SENSE OF DUTY.

The sense of duty is the greatest gift of God. The Idea of Right is the primary and the highest revelation of God to the human mind, and all outward revelations are founded on and addressed to it. All mysteries of science and theology fade away before the grandeur of the simple perception of duty, which dawns on the mind of the little child. That perception brings him into the moral kingdom of God. That lays on him an everlasting bond. He in whom the conviction of duty is unfolded, becomes subject from that moment to a law which no power in the universe can abrogate. He forms a new and indissoluble connection with God, that of an accountable being. He begins to stand before an inward tribunal, on the decisions of which his whole happiness rests; he hears a voice which, if faithfully followed, will guide him to perfection, and in neglecting which he brings upon himself inevitable misery. We little understand the solemnity of the moral principle in every human mind. We think not how awful are its functions. We forget that it is the germ of immortality.

W. 69.

The Right, the Just, the Good, the Holy—these words express an excellence, that awakens in us emotions of reverence and esteem altogether distinct from the impulses we feel towards other forms of Good. Conscience, in enjoining duty, reveals to us its supreme worth. The Right is higher altogether in its essential quality than the profitable, the agreeable, the graceful. It is that which must be done though all other things be left undone, that which must be gained though all else be lost. . . . To perceive the Right then is to recognize the Supreme Good, that which is worthy of supreme love, that which not only solicits us by promises of enjoyment, but utters the voice of absolute command and claims sovereign dominion. . . .

But is this all? Does duty reveal itself as a personal obligation merely, or as confined to yourself? . . . Do you not at once recognize that a Law of Right is promulgated within you, to which *all* men are subject? Still more, do you not feel that this great Law of Right binds not only men, but ALL Intelligent Beings; that it is the law not of the earth only, but of the Universe? Does the Right seem to you a transient, arbitrary ordinance which may hereafter be repealed, and to which other beings and men may be strangers? Have you not, on the contrary, an intimate conviction that the Right is as everlasting, as it is universal? Justice, goodness, disinterestedness, truth, purity, love, do you not transport these ideas to Heaven? Are they not in fact the essential elements of your conception of Heaven? Is it not through them that you imagine beings in higher stages of existence? Is not the very idea of a higher being this, that the elements of Moral Perfection dwell in him in fulness and unity, as they are not unfolded upon earth?

Here then we learn the greatness of Human Nature. This moral principle—the Supreme Law in man—is the Law of the Universe—the very Law to which the highest beings are subject, and in obeying which they find their elevation and their joy. Then man and the highest beings are essentially of One Order. They form One Family. The same Spirit of Goodness enlivens all. To all there is the same Supreme Law, the same Supreme Good! Imagination and genius, in their most inspired moments, can picture nothing in heaven brighter than Moral Goodness—that very Goodness, of which the germ unfolds in the humblest human heart. This Goodness is seen by us intuitively to be confined to no place, to no time, to be the growth of no nation and of no world,

but to be universal, eternal, immutable, absolute, and worthy of highest veneration and love by All Spirits, for ever. Can we then look on the human soul, which is at once the oracle and the subject of this Universal and Eternal Law, as created only for time and this narrow earth?

P. L. 44-49.

THE SOUL IN SIN.

Say not that man's business is to think of his sin and not of his dignity; for great sin implies a great capacity; it is the abuse of a noble nature; and no man can be deeply and rationally contrite, but he who feels that in wrong-doing he has resisted a divine voice, and warred against a divine principle in his own soul. . . . The malignity of sin can only be understood and felt when sin is viewed as the ruin of God's noblest work. . . .

He alone can speak of sin as an infinite evil, and concentrate against it the whole energy of the soul's aversion and dread, who has faith in the unlimited capacities of our spiritual nature, who knows that by love man has affinity to God.

W. 293, 300.—*L.* 378.

"EVERY HUMAN BEING."

The sight of every human being should be accompanied with the thought of the grandeur of a human soul. . . .

The noblest use of travelling is to discern more of the god-like in the human.

A new comprehension of the end and dignity of a human being is to remodel social institutions and manners. . . .

To bring the child to a consciousness of the divinity within him seems to me the highest office which parents and teachers can perform. . . . To educate a child perfectly requires profounder thought, greater wisdom, than to govern a state. . . . He who rears up one child in Christian virtue, or recovers one fellow-creature to God, builds a temple more precious than Solomon's or St. Peter's, more enduring than earth or heaven.

L. 302, 346, 515, 442.—*W.* 20, 421.

SLAVERY, INTEMPERANCE, WAR.

You (Abolitionists) take your stand on the unutterable worth of every human being and on his inalienable rights as a moral and immortal child of God. . . .

What! own a spiritual being, a being made to know and adore God, and who is to outlive the sun and stars! What! chain to our lowest uses a being made for truth and virtue! . . . I can as easily think of owning an angel as of owning a Man.

L. 568.—*W.* 696.

What is the great, essential evil of intemperance? *The voluntary extinction of reason.* The great evil is inward or spiritual. . . . And it is right, it is to be desired, that all other evils should be joined with and follow this. . . . It is right that he who, forewarned, puts out the lights of understanding and conscience within him, who abandons his rank among God's rational creatures, and takes his place among brutes, should stand a monument of wrath among his fellows, should be a teacher wherever he is seen—a teacher in every look and motion, of the awful guilt of destroying reason.

W. 100.

We know not the worth of a man. We know not *who* the victims are on whom war plants its foot, whom the conqueror leaves to the vulture on the field of battle, or carries captive to grace his triumph. Oh! did we know what men are, did we see in them the spiritual, immortal children of God, what a voice should we lift against war! . . . The thought of man, God's immortal child, butchered by his brother, . . . this thought gives to earth the semblance of hell.

W. 678, 10.

IMMORTAL LIFE.

ON WHAT THE FAITH RESTS.

We have all felt, when looking above us into the atmosphere, that there was an infinity of space which we could not explore. When I look into man's spirit, and see there the germs of an immortal life, I feel more deeply that an infinity lies hid beyond what I see. In the idea of Duty, which springs up in every human heart, I discern a Law more sacred and

boundless than gravitation, which binds the soul to a more glorious universe than that to which attraction binds the body, and which is to endure though the laws of physical nature pass away. Every moral sentiment, every intellectual action, is to me a hint, a prophetic sign, of a spiritual power to be expanded for ever, just as a faint ray from a distant star is significant of unimaginable splendor.

W. 83.

The germ of this great truth (Immortality) is in our Nature; in the Conscience, that includes as one of its elements a presentiment of retribution; in the Reason, that beholds in the present an incomplete destiny, needing to be continued for the fulfilment of its end; in the thirst for Happiness, that is too deep to be satisfied on earth, but opens into aspiration towards an infinitely Blessed Being; in the love of moral goodness and beauty, which in proportion as it is cultivated awakens the Ideal of spotless virtue and a desire of community with the All-Perfect One. The voice of our whole nature indeed, properly interpreted, is a cry after higher existence. The restless activity of life is but a pressing forward towards a fulness of good not to be found on earth, and indicates our destination for a state more brightly beautiful than we can now conceive. Heaven is in truth revealed to us, in every pure affection of the human heart, and in every wise and beneficent action, that uplifts the soul in adoration and gratitude. For Heaven is only purity, wisdom, benevolence, joy, peace, in their perfected form. Thus the Immortal Life may be said to surround us perpetually. Some beams of its glory shine upon us in whatever is lovely, heroic and virtuously happy in ourselves or in others. The pure mind carries Heaven within itself, and manifests that Heaven to all around.

P. L. 32.

Heaven.

I know no privilege so great as that of dying; but it is a privilege to those in whom evil is more and more subdued, and who go more and more beyond themselves. . . .

The best proof of a heaven to come is its dawning within us now. . . .

Our natural affections become more and more beautiful to me. I sometimes feel as if I had known nothing of human life till lately,—but so it will be forever. We shall wake up to the wonderful and beautiful in what we have seen with undiscerning eyes, and find a new creation without moving a step from our old haunts. . . . It is possible that the distance of Heaven lies wholly in the veil of flesh, which we now want power to penetrate. A new sense, a new eye, might show the spiritual world compassing us on every side. . . .

We are apt to think of the future world as so happy that none need the aid of others, that effort ceases, that the good have nothing to do but to enjoy. . . . I think of Heaven as a world of stupendous plans and efforts for its own improvement. I think of it as a society passing through successive stages of development, virtue, knowledge, power, by the energy of its own members. . . . One angel's history may be a volume of more various truth than all the records of our race. . . .

That word *forever!* Does it never break upon you with something of the power of sudden thunder, and startle you with a strange awe? O, how wonderful that immortality does not move us more!

L. 612, 622, 693.—*W.* 363, 365.—*L.* 636.

Hell.

Ask multitudes what is the chief evil from which Christ came to save them, and they will tell you, "From hell, from penal fires, from future punishment." Accordingly, they think that salvation is something which another may achieve for them, very much as a neighbor may quench a conflagration that menaces their dwellings and lives. That word hell, which is used so seldom in the sacred pages, which in a faithful translation would not once occur in the writings of Paul, and Peter, and John, which we meet only in four or five discourses of Jesus, and which all persons acquainted with Jewish geography know to be a metaphor, a figure of speech, and not a literal expression,—this word, by a perverse and exaggerated use, has done unspeakable injury to Christianity. . . . Men are

flying from an outward hell, when in truth they carry within them the hell which they should chiefly dread. The salvation which man chiefly needs, and that which brings with it all other deliverance, is salvation from the evil of his own mind. There is something far worse than outward punishment. It is sin; it is the state of a soul which has revolted from God; . . which renounces its Father, and hardens itself against Infinite Love; which, endued with divine powers, enthrals itself to animal lusts; which makes gain its god; . . . which, living under God's eye, dreads man's frown or scorn, and prefers human praise to its own calm consciousness of virtue; which tamely yields to temptation, shrinks with a coward's baseness from the perils of duty, and sacrifices its glory and peace in parting with self-control. No ruin can be compared to this. This the impenitent man carries with him beyond the grave, and there meets its natural issue and inevitable retribution in remorse, self-torture, and woes unknown on earth. This we can not too strongly fear. To save, in the highest sense of that word, is to lift the fallen spirit from this depth, to heal the diseased mind, to restore it to energy and freedom of thought, conscience, and love. This was chiefly the salvation for which Christ shed his blood. For this the holy spirit is given; and to this all the truths of Christianity conspire.

W. 251, 252.

For myself, I see no need of a local hell for the sinner after death. When I reflect how, in the present world, a guilty mind has power to deform the countenance, to undermine health, to poison pleasure, to darken the fairest scenes of nature, to turn prosperity into a curse, I can easily understand how, in the world to come, sin, working without obstruction according to its own nature, should spread the gloom of a dungeon over the whole creation, and wherever it goes should turn the universe into a hell.

W. 353.

What is Religion?

Its Root, Aspiration for the Perfect.

The desire for an excellence never actually reached by humanity, the aspiration towards that Ideal which we express by the word Perfection, this is the seminal principle of religion. And this is the root of all progress in the human race. Religion is not an exclusive impulse. It does not grow from an emotion that is centered wholly upon God and seeks no other object. It springs from the same desire for whatever is more Perfect than our own nature and our present life, which has impelled man towards all his great spiritual acquisitions and to all great improvements of society. This principle prompts the mind to create imaginary beings, and to attach itself with delight to human agents of surpassing power and goodness. But in these objects it can find no rest. These are too frail a support for so sublime an emotion. This principle God implanted for Himself. Through this the human mind corresponds to the Supreme Divinity. This principle, being in its very essence insatiable, partakes of the nature of infinity; and no Being but the Infinite One can supply its wants.

P. L. 5.

Its Flower, our Perfection.

The Perfection of our Nature—God promises nothing else or less. . . . Not a single worldly blessing is pledged to us. And this is well. God's outward gifts—mere shadows as they are of Happiness—soon pass away; their transitoriness reveals, by contrast, the only True Good. . . .

This Good of Perfection, if we will seek it, is as sure as God's own Being. Here I fix my Confidence. When I look round me, I see nothing to trust in. On all sides are the surges of a restless ocean, and everywhere the traces of decay. But amidst this world of fugitive existence, abides One Immortal Nature. It is the Human Soul—your soul—my soul—the soul of every human being. Entirely I trust that this is Immortal, because allied by god-like powers to the Father. This Soul He created, as I believe, to become a glorious Image of Himself—to contend

with and overcome all evil, to seek and receive evermore all good, to obey the eternal Law of Right, to which God's own Will conforms. In God I trust for this Infinite Good. I know no other Good for which to trust Him. Take away *this*, and I have nothing, you have nothing, worth living for. Henceforth our existence is without an End; and the Universe itself seems to be but a waste of power.

P. L. 113, 114.

LOVE OF GOD—LOVE OF GOODNESS.

Very few state with sufficient strength and precision the moral foundation and the moral nature of religion. Love to God is from beginning to end the love of virtue. Religion is the expansion and most perfect form of the moral faculty of man. . . . Religion and virtue, wherever they exist, are the mind itself, and nothing else. They are human nature, and nothing else. A good man's piety and virtue are not distinct possessions; they are himself, and all the glory which belongs to them belongs to himself. What is religion? Not a foreign inhabitant, not something alien to our nature, which comes and takes up its abode in the soul. It is the soul itself, lifting itself up to its Maker. What is virtue? It is the soul listening to, and revering, and obeying a law which belongs to its very essence—the law of duty. We sometimes smile when we hear men decrying human nature, and in the same breathing exalting religion to the skies; as if religion were anything more than human nature acting in obedience to its chief law. Religion and virtue, as far as we possess them, are ourselves; and the homage which is paid to these attributes is in truth a tribute to the soul of man.

W. 572, 570.

"A PIOUS MAN."

We think that much which is called piety is worthless. . . . Most certainly, if the love of God be that which often bears its name, the less we have of it the better. If religion be shipwreck of understanding, we cannot keep too far from it. . . .

We conceive that the true love of God is a moral sentiment, founded on a clear perception, and consisting in a high esteem and veneration of his moral perfections. Thus it perfectly coincides, and is, in fact, the same thing, with the love of virtue, rectitude, goodness. You will easily judge, then, what we esteem the surest and only decisive signs of piety. We lay no stress on strong excitements. . . . We do not judge of the bent of men's minds by their raptures, any more than we judge of the natural direction of a tree during a storm. We rather suspect loud profession, for we have observed that deep feeling is generally noiseless, and least seeks display. . . . We esteem him, and him only, a pious man, who practically conforms to God's moral perfections and government; who shows his delight in God's benevolence by loving and serving his neighbor; his delight in God's justice by being resolutely upright; his sense of God's purity by regulating his thoughts, imagination, and desires; and whose conversation, business, and domestic life are swayed by a regard to God's presence and authority. . . . One surrender of desire to God's will is worth a thousand transports. . . . Is not the very spirit of piety the devotion of the soul to moral good?

W. 380, 381.—*L.* 647.

"WHAT, THEN, IS RELIGION?"

What, then, is religion? I answer, it is not the adoration of a God with whom we have no common properties; of a distinct, foreign, separate being; but of an all-communicating Parent. It recognizes and adores God as a being whom we know through our own souls; who has made man in his own image; who is the perfection of our own spiritual nature; who has sympathies with us as kindred beings; who is near us, not in place only, like this all-surrounding atmosphere, but by spiritual influence and love; who looks on us with parental interest; and whose great design it is to communicate to us for ever, and in freer and fuller streams, his own power, goodness, and joy. . . .

True religion is the worship of a perfect being who is the author of perfection to those who adore him. On this ground and on no other religion rests.

W. 296, 249.

The Idea of God.

Its Source.

We must start in religion from our own souls. In these is the fountain of all divine truth. An outward revelation is only possible and intelligible, on the ground of conceptions and principles previously furnished by the soul. Here is our primitive teacher and light. Let us not disparage it. . . . The grand ideas of Power, Reason, Wisdom, Love, Rectitude, Holiness, Blessedness, that is, of all God's attributes, come from within, from the action of our own spiritual nature. . . An attribute by becoming perfect does not part with its essence. . . . The idea of God, sublime and awful as it is, is the idea of our own spiritual nature purified and enlarged to infinity. In ourselves are the elements of the Divinity.

W. 6, 293, 294.

All minds are of one family, . . . are essentially of one origin, one nature, kindled from one divine flame, and are all tending to one centre, one happiness. This great truth, to us the greatest of truths, which lies at the foundation of all religion and of all hope, seems to me not only sustained by proofs which satisfy the reason, but to be one of the deep instincts of our nature. It mingles unperceived with all our worship of God, which uniformly takes for granted that He is a Mind having thought, affection, and volition like ourselves.

W. 313.

Conscience and the Idea of God.

I have spoken of the principle of the Right, the Good, the Holy. But without this Idea of God—the Perfect Being—the moral principle would pine and die in its conflict with evil. . . . Religion gives infinite worth to Conscience. . . . The conscience was never intended to govern alone. It was made to derive dominion from a conscious union with a Supreme Being. And this Supreme Being is revealed to us by religion. Religion is faith in an Infinite Creator, who delights in and enjoins that Rectitude which conscience commands us to seek. This conviction gives a Divine Sanction to duty. From religion I learn that my Idea of Right is not an individual, private, personal conviction, but that it is derived from the Universal Parent; that it is His Inspiration; that it is not a lonely voice in my own soul, but the word of the Infinite Will. Now I see that Goodness is not merely a law of my own mind, but the Supreme Law of the Universe, that all intelligent beings are subject to it, that all creation conspires to fulfil it. Without this faith in a Holy God, duty would be but a whisper in my breast. With Him, it comes in a voice louder than all thunders. Without a consciousness of God, I might hope to win happiness in spite of the violation of the law of Rectitude. Now I know that it would be more rational to seek happiness on the rack or in the furnace, than in wrong-doing. All Nature now becomes to me the preacher of righteousness; for the heavens and the earth, the sunshine and storms, in their very Order, reveal an Almighty Power, who is pledged to the support of virtue and to the suppression of sin. Without a God, there would be no other Inspector of my motives, thoughts, desires, and purposes, than my own soul; and I might succeed in disguising from myself, and hiding from others, inward impurity and deformity. But now a Light more piercing than a thousand suns, and veiled by no cloud nor night, shines full upon me; and I feel that my most secret purposes lie bare before Infinite Purity. Who does not recognize the authority added to conscience, the sanction given to duty, by this confidence in an Almighty Lawgiver and an Ever-present Judge, whose law and supreme delight are the Moral Perfection of His children.

P. L. 49, 191–193.

The Moral God.

There is but one ground for virtuous affection in the universe, but one object worthy of cherished and enduring love in heaven or on earth, and that is Moral Goodness. I make nc exceptions. My principle applies to all beings, to the Creator as well as to his creatures. The claim of God to the love of his rational offspring rests on the rectitude and benevolence of his will. . . . It is not because his will is

irresistible, but because his will is the perfection of virtue, that we pay him allegiance. . . . The only power which can and ought to be loved is a beneficent and righteous power. The creation is glorious, and binds us to supreme and everlasting love to God, only because it sprung from and shows forth this energy of goodness; nor has any being a claim on love any further than this same energy dwells in him, and is manifested in him. I know no exception to this principle.

W. 317, 376.

God, in giving us conscience, has implanted a principle within us which forbids us to prostrate ourselves before mere power, or to offer praise where we do not discover worth; a principle which challenges our supreme homage for supreme goodness, and which absolves us from guilt, when we abhor a severe and unjust administration. Our Creator has consequently waived his own claims on our veneration and obedience, any farther than He discovers Himself to us in characters of benevolence, equity, and righteousness. He rests his authority on the perfect coincidence of his will and government with those great and fundamental principles of morality written on our souls. . . Take away the moral relation of the created spirit to the universal spirit, and that of entire dependence would remain as it is now; but no ground and no capacity of religion would remain; and the splendor of the universe would fade away.

W 465.

An Immoral God.

Christianity, we all agree, is designed to manifest God as perfect benevolence, and to bring men to love and imitate Him. Now, is it probable that a religion, having this object, gives views of the Supreme Being from which our moral convictions and benevolent sentiments shrink with horror, and which, if made our pattern, would convert us into monsters? It is plain that, were a human parent to form himself on the Universal Father, as described by Calvinism, that is, were he to bring his children into life totally depraved, and then to pursue them with endless punishment, we should charge him with a cruelty not surpassed in the annals of the world; or, were a sovereign to incapacitate his subjects in any way whatever for obeying his laws, and then to torture them in dungeons of perpetual woe, we should say that history records no darker crime. And is it probable that a religion which aims to attract and assimilate us to God, considered as love, should hold Him up to us in these heart-withering characters? . . . Man would owe no allegiance to such a Maker, and could not, of course, contract the guilt of violating it. The wrong would lie on the side of the Creator. . . . Were this doctrine really believed (which it can not be), men would look up with dread and detestation to the Author of their being, and look round with horror on their fellow-creatures. It would dissolve society. Were men to see in one another wholly corrupt beings—incarnate fiends, without one genuine virtue—society would become as repulsive as a den of lions or a nest of vipers.

W. 467, 396, 245.

God in Nature.

In Nature, so vibrating with motion, where is the Moving Energy? Can you discern the all-embracing, all-pervading Force that gives the primal impulse to the moving whole, and perpetuates movement through immensity; that wheels planets and suns in their vast orbits, and at the same instant quickens countless and multiform animals and plants? . . . The Infinite is revealed in all things. I do not except the most common. Behold the humblest wild flower. To produce that weed all Nature has conspired. Into itself it receives the influence of all the elements—light, heat, and air. Sun, earth, and ocean meet to pay it tribute. The least thing in Nature acts upon all things, and is acted on by all; so that each implies all and is represented in all. In a word, to understand the simplest work of God, the Universe must be comprehended. For that work, however frail and transient, could not exist, did not all things else exist. It is a living part of this mighty living Universe. . . . Look at a grain of wheat! That seed is the fruit of all harvests of past ages since the creation of the world. It carries us back to the

hour when the morning stars sang for joy over the new-born earth. In it are centred the combined forces of suns and rains, of soils and climates, for a period of which history has no record. And again, this tiny seed has within it prolific energy to cover whole kingdoms, it may be the whole globe, with vegetation, and to multiply itself without end. . . .

What and whence is that principle called Life, to which this seed owes its distinctive organic character,—which can modify and counteract the laws of nature, which can mould the plant to symmetric wholeness and unfold it into consummate beauty? Life, that awful power, so endlessly various in the forms it assumes,—Life that fills earth, air, and sea with motion, growth, activity, and joy,—Life that enlivens us, what is it? What sight can discern, what thought explore its mystery? Thus the Infinite, the Mysterious, the Unsearchable meets us, veiled in the lowliest creations. But that which falls within the range of our senses is as nothing compared with the invisible, the intangible, the incomprehensible, that lies beneath. And if Wisdom thus speaks through the minutest existence, what a voice comes to us from the Immensity, wherein we are encompassed!

What blessedness it is to dwell amidst this transparent air, which the eye can pierce without limit, amidst these floods of pure, soft, cheering light, under this immeasurable arch of heaven, and in sight of these countless stars! An Infinite Universe is each moment opened to our view. And this Universe is the sign and symbol of Infinite Power, Intelligence, Purity, Bliss, and Love. . . . What a Name is written all through it in characters of celestial light! A Spiritual Voice pervades it, more solemn, sublime, and thrilling than if the roar of oceans, thunders, whirlwinds and conflagrations were concentrated in one burst of praise. This voice is all the more eloquent because it is spiritual; because it is the voice in which the All-Wise speaks to all intelligences.

P. L. 36–39.

Communion with God.

"The divinity growing within us."

There is a light, to which others are strangers, that visits the inward eye of the man who contends with evil in himself, and is true to his convictions of duty. This is the highest inspiration, surpassing that of prophets. . . . We learn the Divinity through a divine principle within ourselves. We learn the majesty and happiness of virtue by consciousness, by experience, by giving up all to virtue, and in no other way. . . . Whenever we invigorate the understanding by honestly and resolutely seeking truth, and by withstanding whatever might warp the judgment; whenever we invigorate the conscience by following it in opposition to the passions; whenever we receive a blessing gratefully, bear a trial patiently, or encounter peril or scorn with moral courage; whenever we perform a disinterested deed; whenever we lift up the heart in true adoration to God; whenever we war against a habit or desire which is strengthening itself against our higher principles; whenever we think, speak, or act, with moral energy and resolute devotion to duty, be the occasion ever so humble, obscure, familiar; then the divinity is growing within us.

W. 286, 298.

How then can we attain to an abiding consciousness of living relationship with the Living God. . . . You need not go far to learn how you may gain more vivid views of God. The sin that now rises to memory as your *bosom sin*, let this first of all be withstood and mastered. Oppose it instantly by a detestation of it, by a firm will to conquer it, by reflection, by reason, and by prayer. Such a spiritual conflict, trifling though it may appear, will do more, than can all other influences combined, to fit you for a near, strong, affectionate intimacy with your God. And without such a struggle of your will —which is but another name for Repentance—you can never draw a step nearer to the All-Holy and All-True. He will always be to you a God afar off.

P. L. 94–97.

"From inspiration?"

I owe the little which I am to the conscientiousness with which I have listened to objections springing up in my own mind to what I have inclined and sometimes thirsted to believe, and I have attained through this to a serenity of faith that once seemed denied in the present state. . . .

I know my books contain some great truths, written not from tradition, but from deep conviction, from the depths of my soul,—may I not say from inspiration? I mean nothing miraculous;—does not God speak in us all? No one does, or can, see the imperfections of what I have written as I do myself.

L. 452, 408.

Prayer.

Prayer gives intensity to the consciousness of our connection with God,—lifts us out of our narrowness into communion with the Infinite,—teaches us to regard our interests as embraced within the immense designs of Providence,—opens to us a view of our relations to the universe and all spirits. We come to Him who has the well-being of all creatures in his control, in whom the whole good of the universe is concentrated: can we approach him absorbed in selfish wants? We come to the Spiritual Father, who desires our perfection, whose law of rectitude is immutable, whose will of goodness is supreme, who abhors evil: must not every desire become purified in such a presence? God always regards us in our connections with other beings; every gift bestowed upon us, or withheld from us, will affect them as well as us: should not our petition be, then, to receive only what the Universal Father sees to be best for all as for ourselves? The true spirit of prayer is a submission of ourselves to the good of the whole, to the purposes of Infinite Love.

L. 648.

Our Father, Who Art Within.

He pervades, penetrates our souls. . . . We do not discern Him because He is too near, too inward, too deep to be recognized by our present imperfect consciousness. And He is thus near, not only to discern, but to act, to influence, to give his spirit, to communicate to us divinity. This is the great paternal gift of God. He has greater gifts than the world. The very attributes from which the earth and heavens sprang, these He imparts to his rational offspring. Even his disinterested, impartial, universal goodness, which diffuses beauty, life, and happiness, even this excellence it is his purpose to breathe into and cherish in the human soul.

In regard to the spiritual influence by which God brings the created spirit into conformity to his own, I would that I could speak worthily. It is gentle, that it may not interfere with our freedom. It sustains, mingles with, and moves all our faculties. It acts through nature, providence, revelation, society, and experience; and the Scriptures, confirmed by reason and the testimonies of the wisest and best men, teach us that it acts still more directly. God, being immediately present to the soul, holds immediate communion with it, in proportion as it prepares itself to receive and to use aright the heavenly inspiration. He opens the inward eye to Himself, communicates secret monitions of duty, revives and freshens our convictions of truth, builds up our faith in human immortality, unseals the deep, unfathomed fountains of Love within us, instils strength, peace, and comfort, and gives victory over pain, sin, and death.

This influence of God, exerted on the soul to conform it to Himself, to make it worthy of its divine parentage, this it is which most clearly manifests what is meant by his being our Father. . . .

And when the Father's Presence is felt like that of a visible Friend, and the parental love of the All-Perfect penetrates his inmost being, suffusing his eyes with tears of thankfulness, and lifting them upwards with immortal hope,—in such high moments, whence does he consciously derive his unutterable joy? By experience he then knows, as well as feels, that this Peace past all understanding is the Influx of the Peace of God. With mingled gratitude and awe, he recognizes then, that above, upon, within his own spirit is moving the Divine Spirit, bringing the

Light of an Eternal Day. Thenceforth the truth, written in his heart by the finger of God Himself, becomes a glorious reality, that to all who ask for His Holy Spirit, the Father GIVES.

W. 417—*P. L.* 150, 151.

THE SOUL'S PEACE.

There is a twofold peace. The first is negative. It is relief from disquiet and corroding care. It is repose after conflict and storms. But there is another and a higher peace, to which this is but the prelude, "a peace of God which passeth all understanding", and properly called "the kingdom of heaven within us". This state is anything but negative. It is the highest and most strenuous action of the soul, but an entirely harmonious action, in which all our powers and affections are blended in a beautiful proportion, and sustain and perfect one another. It is more than silence after storms. It is as the concord of all melodious sounds. Has the reader never known a season when, in the fullest flow of thought and feeling, in the universal action of the soul, an inward calm, profound as midnight silence, yet bright as the still summer noon, full of joy, but unbroken by one throb of tumultuous passion, has been breathed through his spirit, and given him a glimpse and presage of the serenity of a happier world? Of this character is the peace of religion. It is a conscious harmony with God and the creation, an alliance of love with all beings, a sympathy with all that is pure and happy, a surrender of every separate will and interest, a participation of the spirit and life of the universe, an entire concord of purpose with its Infinite Original. This is peace, and the true happiness of man.

W. 574.

IN CHURCH.

"Come into this place with worship of the soul, to elevate the spirit to God.

"Let not this house be desecrated by a religion of show. Let it not degenerate into a place of forms.

"Come not here to take part in lethargic repetitions of sacred words.

"Come not from a cold sense of duty, to quiet the conscience with the thought of having paid a debt to God.

"Come not to perform a present task to insure a future heaven. Come to find heaven now, to bind your souls indissolubly to your Maker.

"Come to worship in spirit and in truth, not prostrating your understandings, not renouncing the divine gift of reason, but offering an enlightened homage such as is due to the Fountain of intelligence and truth.

"Come to worship with the heart as well as with the intellect, with life, with fervor, with zeal.

"Come to worship with strong conviction, with living faith in a higher presence than meets the eye, with a feeling of God's presence not only around you, but in the depths of your souls.

"Come to worship with a filial spirit, not with fear, dread, and gloom; not with sepulchral tones and desponding looks, but with humble, cheerful, boundless trust, with overflowing gratitude, with a love willing and earnest to do and suffer whatever may approve your devotion to God.

"Come to offer generous worship, worthy of him who is the Perfection of Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Blessedness.

"Adore him with the calmest reason, and the profoundest love, and strive to conform yourselves to what you adore."

"Go from this house to worship God by reverencing the human soul as his chosen sanctuary. Revere it in yourselves, revere it in others, and labor to carry it forward to perfection.

"Go forth to respect the rights, and seek the true, enduring welfare of all within your influence.

"Go forth to do good with every power which God bestows, to make every place you enter happier by your presence, to throw your whole weight into the scale of human freedom and improvement, to withstand all wrong, to uphold all right, and to give light, life, and strength to each immortal soul."

W. 420, 421.

Jesus.

"I love him for ——."

Others may love Christ for mysterious attributes; I love him for the rectitude of his soul and his life. I love him for that benevolence which went through Judea, instructing the ignorant, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind. I love him for that universal charity which comprehended the despised publican, the hated Samaritan, the benighted heathen, and sought to bring a world to God and to happiness. I love him for that gentle, mild, forbearing spirit, which no insult, outrage, injury could overpower; and which desired as earnestly the repentance and happiness of its foes as the happiness of its friends. I love him for the spirit of magnanimity, constancy, and fearless rectitude with which, amidst peril and opposition, he devoted himself to the work which God gave him to do. I love him for the wise and enlightened zeal with which he espoused the true, the spiritual interests of mankind, and through which he lived and died to redeem them from every sin, to frame them after his own godlike virtue. I love him, I have said, for his moral excellence; I know nothing else to love.

W. 321.

What Jesus Saw in Man.

Do you ask what was the great principle in the depth of Christ's character, that on which his wonderful sympathy was founded, and which endeared to him his office of universal Savior? I answer, it was his conviction of the greatness of the human soul. He saw in man the impress and image of the divinity, and therefore thirsted for his redemption, and took the tenderest interest in him, whatever might be the rank, character, or condition in which he was found. . . . Jesus looked on men with an eye which pierced beneath the material frame. The body vanished before him. The trappings of the rich, the rags of the poor, were nothing to him. He looked through them as though they did not exist, to the soul; and there, amidst clouds of ignorance and plague-spots of sin, he recognized a spiritual and immortal nature, and the germs of power and perfection which might be unfolded forever. In the most fallen and depraved man he saw a being who might become an angel of light. Still more, he felt that there was nothing in himself to which men might not ascend.

W. 309, 310.

Imitableness of Christ.

Jesus respected human nature; he felt it to be his own. . . . All minds are of one family. . . . And I am persuaded that there is not a glory, a virtue, a power, a joy possessed by Jesus Christ, to which his disciples will not successively rise. . . I no longer see aught to prevent our becoming whatever was good and great in Jesus on earth.

W. 313, 315.

The Cross of Christ.

According to common views, the Death of Christ, instead of being the great *quickener* of heroic virtue, is made a substitute for it; and many hope to be happy through Christ's dying agony, much more than through the participation of his Self-sacrificing Life. I doubt whether any error has done so much to rob Christianity of its purifying and ennobling power, as these false views of Atonement. The Cross of Jesus—when supposed to bless us by some mysterious agency of reconciling God to us, and not by transforming our characters into the spirit and image of our Savior—becomes our peril, and may prove our ruin. Of one reality I am sure, and I speak it with entire confidence. I cannot receive from the Cross of Christ any good so great as that sublime Spirit of Self-sacrifice, of Love to God, and of unbounded Charity, which the Cross so gloriously manifested.

P. L. 281.

"The Great Emancipator."

In what sense is he a Savior? The answer is sublime as it is simple. Jesus Christ is the Great *Emancipator*. He came to set the spirit of Man *free*. He came to give Liberty to Human Nature, through the whole range of its affections, faculties, and energies, and throughout the whole scope of its being and destiny. Thus is he the Savior. . . . Salvation

and Virtue are but different aspects of the same Supreme Good. . . .

Nothing has wrought so powerfully on the human soul as the Mind and Character of Jesus Christ. . . . The great impulse which is to carry forward the human race is the *Character* of Jesus; understood ever more clearly, and ever more deeply felt. . . . Jesus with his celestial Love is the LIFE of his Religion.

P. L. 233, 278, 224, 227.

FREEDOM AND FELLOWSHIP IN RELIGION.

REASON IN RELIGION.

Freedom is the nurse of intellectual and moral vigor. Better expose the mind to error than rob it of hardihood and individuality. Keep not the destined teacher of mankind from the perilous field where the battle between Truth and Falsehood is fought. Let him grapple with difficulty, sophistry, and error. Truth is a conquest, and no man holds her so fast as he who has won her by conflict.

W. 263.

The truth is, and it ought not to be disguised, that our ultimate reliance is, and must be, on our own reason. Faith in this power lies at the foundation of all other faith. No trust can be placed in God if we discredit the faculty by which God is discerned. . . . Reason is the very faculty to which revelation is addressed, and by which alone it can be explained. . . . If, after a deliberate and impartial use of our best faculties, a professed revelation seems to us plainly to disagree with itself or to clash with great principles which we cannot question, we ought not to hesitate to withhold from it our belief. I am surer that my rational nature is from God than that any book is an expression of his will.

W. 337-8.

I glory in Christianity becauses it enlarges, invigorates, exalts my rational nature. If I could not be a Christian without ceasing to be rational, I should not hesitate as to my choice. I feel myself bound to sacrifice to Christianity property, reputation, life; but I ought not to sacrifice to any religion that reason which lifts me above the brute and constitutes me a man. I can conceive no sacrilege greater than to prostrate or renounce the highest faculty which we have derived from God. In so doing we should offer violence to the divinity within us. . . . Reason is the most glorious form or exercise of the intellectual nature. It corresponds to the unity of God and the universe, and seeks to make the soul the image and mirror of this sublime unity.

W. 233, 235.

CREEDS.

I cannot but look on human creeds with feelings approaching contempt. When I bring them into contrast with the New Testament, into what insignificance do they sink! What are they! Skeletons, freezing abstractions, metaphysical expressions of unintelligible dogmas; and these I am to regard as the expositions of the fresh, living, infinite truth which came from Jesus. . . . Creeds are to the Scriptures what rush-lights are to the sun. . . .

Christian Truth is Infinite. Who can think of shutting it up in a few lines of an abstract creed? You might as well compress the boundless atmosphere, the fire, the all-pervading light, the free winds of the universe, into separate parcels, and weigh and label them, as break up Christianity into a few propositions. Christianity is freer, more illimitable, than the light or the winds. It is too mighty to be bound down by man's puny hands. It is a spirit rather than a rigid doctrine, the spirit of boundless love. . . . It is a vast and ever-unfolding whole, pervaded by one spirit, each precept and doctrine deriving its vitality from its union with all. When I see this generous, heavenly doctrine compressed and cramped in human creeds, I feel as I should were I to see screws and chains applied to the countenance and limbs of a noble fellow-creature, deforming and destroying one of the most beautiful works of God.

W. 437.

How deeply do I commiserate the minister who, in the warmth and freshness of youth, is visited with glimpses of higher

truth than is embodied in the creed, but who dares not be just to himself, and is made to echo what is not the simple, natural expression of his own mind! Better for a minister to preach in barns or the open air, where he may speak the truth from the fulness of his soul, than to lift up in cathedrals, amidst pomp and wealth, a voice which is not true to his inward thoughts. If they who wear the chains of creeds once knew the happiness of breathing the air of freedom, and of moving with an unincumbered spirit, no wealth or power in the world's gift would bribe them to part with their spiritual liberty.

W. 488.

SECTARIANISM.

There is no portion of human history more humbling than that of sects. . . . We read with astonishment and horror the history of the church; and sometimes when we look back on the fires of persecution, and on the zeal of Christians in building up walls of separation, and in giving up one another to perdition, we feel as if we were reading the records of an infernal rather than a heavenly kingdom. An enemy to every religion, if asked to describe a Christian, would, with some show of reason, depict him as an idolater of his own distinguishing opinions, covered with badges of party, shutting his eyes on the virtues and his ears on the arguments of his opponents, arrogating all excellence to his own sect and all saving power to his own creed, sheltering under the name of pious zeal the love of domination, the conceit of infallibility, and the spirit of intolerance, and trampling on men's rights under the pretense of saving their souls. . . .

In ecclesiastical history we see Christians denouncing and excommunicating one another for supposed error, until every denomination has been pronounced accursed by some portion of the Christian world; so that were the curses of men to prevail, not one human being would enter heaven.

W. 476, 382, 481.

"THE GRAND HERESY."

Can any man think lightly of goodness because it has not grown up in a certain church, or exalt any church above it? My friends, one of the grandest truths of religion is the supreme importance of character, of virtue, of that divine spirit which shone out in Christ. The grand heresy is to substitute anything for this, whether creed, or form, or church. . . .

Think no man the better, no man the worse, for the church he belongs to. Try him by his fruits. Expel from your breasts the demon of sectarianism, narrowness, bigotry, intolerance. This is not, as we are apt to think, a slight sin. It is a denial of the supremacy of goodness.

W. 444.

"UNITARIANISM."

I indeed take cheerfully the name of a Unitarian, because unwearied efforts are used to raise against it a popular cry; and I have not so learned Christ as to shrink from reproaches cast on what I deem his truth. Were the name more honored I should be glad to throw it off; for I fear the shackles which a party connection imposes. I wish to regard myself as belonging not to a sect, but to the community of free minds, of lovers of truth, of followers of Christ, both on earth and in heaven. I desire to escape the narrow walls of a particular church, and to live under the open sky, in the broad light, looking far and wide, seeing with my own eyes, hearing with my own ears, and following Truth meekly but resolutely, however arduous or solitary be the path in which she leads. I am, then, no organ of a sect, but speak from myself alone. (1828).

W. 247.

The time is come when religious bodies will be estimated by *the good they do*, when creeds are to be less and less the test of a Christian, and when they who labor most effectually for their fellow-beings will be acknowledged to give the best proof of having found the truth. . . . May it not be made the leading trait of a Unitarian, that he is a man who sympathizes with, and respects, the less favored classes of society, and that he is pledged to use all his powers for their elevation? . . . We ought to be by eminence *Christian Philanthropists*. (1833?)

L. 478.

Old Unitarianism must undergo important modification or developments. Thus I have felt for years. Though an advance on previous systems, and bearing some better fruits, it does not work deeply, it does not strike living springs in the soul. This is perfectly consistent with the profound piety of individuals of the body. But it cannot quicken and regenerate the world. No matter how reasonable it may be, if it is without *power*. Its history is singular. It began as a protest against the rejection of reason,—against mental slavery. It pledged itself to progress, as its life and end; but it has gradually grown stationary, and now we have a *Unitarian Orthodoxy*. Perhaps this is not to be wondered at or deplored, for all reforming bodies seem doomed to stop, in order to keep the ground, much or little, which they have gained. They become conservative, and out of them must spring new reformers, to be persecuted generally by the old. With these views, I watch all new movements with great interest. (1841.)

L. 435.

The True Unity.

We have grown up under different influences. We bear different names. But if we purpose solemnly to do God's will, and are following the precepts and example of Christ, we are one church, and let nothing divide us. Diversities of opinion may incline us to worship under different roofs, or diversities of tastes or habit, to worship with different forms. But these varieties do not break the unity of Christ's church. . . . In many great truths, in those which are most quickening, purifying and consoling, we all, I hope, agree. There is, too, a common ground of practice, aloof from all controversy, on which we may all meet. We may all unite hearts and hands in doing good; . . . in toiling and suffering for the cause of humanity; in spreading intelligence, freedom and virtue; . . . in resisting the abuses and corruptions of past ages; in exploring and drying up the sources of poverty; in rescuing the fallen from intemperance; in succoring the orphan and widow; in enlightening and elevating the depressed portions of the community; in breaking the yoke of the oppressed and enslaved; in exposing and withstanding the spirit and horrors of war; . . . in redeeming the world from sin and woe. The angels and pure spirits who visit our earth, come not to join a sect, but to do good to all. May this universal charity descend on us, and possess our hearts; may our narrowness, exclusiveness, and bigotry melt away under this mild, celestial fire!

W. 444.

The Church Universal.

Do not tell me that I surrender myself to a fiction of imagination, when I say, that distant Christians, that all Christians and myself, form one body, one church, just as far as a common love and piety possess our hearts. Nothing is more real than this spiritual union. There *is* one grand, all-comprehending church; and if I am a Christian, I belong to it, and no man can shut me out of it. You may exclude me from your Roman church, your Episcopal church, and your Calvinistic church, on account of supposed defects in my creed or my sect, and I am content to be excluded. But I will not be severed from the great body of Christ. Who shall sunder me from such men as Fenelon, and Pascal, and Borromeo, from Archbishop Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, and John Howard? Who can rupture the spiritual bond between these men and myself? Do I not hold them dear? Does not their spirit, flowing out through their writings and lives, penetrate my soul? Are they not a portion of my being? . . . And is it in the power of synod, or conclave, or of all the ecclesiastical combinations on earth, to part me from them? . . . A pure mind belongs to the church, the family of the pure, in all worlds. Virtue is no local thing. It is honorable for its own independent everlasting beauty. This is the bond of the universal church. No man can be excommunicated from it but by himself, by the death of goodness in his own breast.

W. 436.

The Reformer and his Methods.

Victory that Lasts.

I apprehend that there is but one way of putting an end to our present dissensions; and that is, not the triumph of any existing system over all others, but the acquisition of something better than the best we now have.

L. 331.

Expel Error by Instilling Truth.

The most effectual method of expelling error is not to meet it sword in hand, but gradually to instill great truths with which it cannot easily co-exist, and by which the mind outgrows it. . . . Instead of expending his strength in tracking and refuting error, let the minister who would serve the cause of truth labor to gain and diffuse more and more enlarged and lofty views of our religion, of its nature, spirit, and end. Let him labor to separate what is of universal and everlasting application from the local and the temporary; to penetrate beneath the letter to the spirit; to detach the primary, essential, and all-comprehending principles of Christianity from the incrustations, accidental associations, and subordinate appendages by which they are often obscured; and to fix and establish these in men's minds as the standard by which more partial views are to be tried.

W. 275.

Truth-Sowing.

This morning I plucked a globe of the dandelion, — the seed-vessel, — and was struck as never before with the silent, gentle manner in which Nature sows her seed, and I asked if this is not the way in which the spiritual seed, *truth*, is to be sown. I saw, too, how Nature sows her seed broadcast; how the gossamer wing of the dandelion-seed scatters it far and wide; how it falls, as by accident, and sends up the plant where no one suspects. So we must send truth abroad, not forcing it on here and there a mind, not watching its progress anxiously, but trusting that it will light on a kindly soil, and yield its fruit. So Nature teaches.

L. 694.

Quietly, Steadily.

On this, as on almost every subject, our most important duties are quiet, retired, noiseless, attracting little notice, and administering little powerful excitement to the imagination. The surest efforts for extending Christianity are those which few observe, which are recorded in no magazine, blazoned at no anniversaries, immortalized by no eloquence. Such efforts, being enjoined only by conscience and God, and requiring steady, patient, unwearied toil, we are apt to overlook, and perhaps never more so than when the times furnish a popular substitute for them, and when we can discharge our consciences by labors which, demanding little self-denial, are yet talked of as the highest exploits of Christian charity. Hence it is that when most is said of labors to propagate Christianity, the least may be really and effectually done. We hear a torrent roaring, and imagine that the fields are plentifully watered, when the torrent owes its violence to a ruinous concentration of streams which before moved quietly in a thousand little channels, moistening the hidden roots, and publishing their course, not to the ear but to the eye, by the refreshing verdure which grew up around them.

W. 255.

No Evil that Good may Come.

One great principle, which we should lay down as immovably true is, that if a good work cannot be carried on by the calm, self-controlled, benevolent spirit of Christianity, then the time for doing it has not come. God asks not the aid of our vices. He can overrule them for good, but they are not the chosen instruments of human happiness. . . .

The moment a man parts with moral independence; the moment he judges of duty, not from the inward voice, but from the interests and will of a party; the moment he commits himself to a leader or a body, and winks at evil, because division would hurt the cause; the moment he shakes off his particular responsibility, because he is but one of a thousand or million by whom the evil is done,—that moment he parts with his moral power. He is shorn of the energy of single-hearted faith in the right and the true.

He hopes from man's policy wnat nothing but loyalty to God can accomplish. He substitutes coarse weapons, forged by man's wisdom, for celestial power.

W. 734.

A Time to Dare.

He wanted a just faith in man's capacity of freedom. He inclined to dark views of the condition and prospects of his country. He had too much the wisdom of experience. He wanted what may be called the wisdom of hope. . . . We apprehend that it is possible to make experience too much our guide. There are seasons, in human affairs, of inward and outward revolution, when new depths seem to be broken up in the soul, when new wants are unfolded in multitudes, and a new and undefined good is thirsted for. These are periods when the principles of experience need to be modified, when hope and trust and instinct claim a share with prudence in the guidance of affairs, when, in truth, *to dare* is the highest wisdom.

W. 641.

Unflinching, Calm.

When a good cause suffers from the excesses of its friends, the true course is, not to abandon it in despair, nor to surrender it to the frenzy of the populace, but to espouse and prosecute it with calm wisdom, enlightened zeal, and unfettered, fearless resolution.

L. 534.

"Fear no man."

Fear no man, high or low, rich or poor, taught or untaught. Honor all men; love all men; but fear none. . . . Let your words breathe a heroic valor. . . . Having deliberately, conscientiously sought the truth, abide by your convictions at all hazards Wait not to be backed by numbers. Wait not till you are sure of an echo from a crowd. The fewer the voices on the side of truth, the more distinct and strong must be your own. Put faith in truth as mightier than error, prejudice, or passion, and be ready to take a place among its martyrs. Feel that truth is not a local, temporary influence, but immutable, everlasting, the same in all worlds, one with God, and armed with his omnipotence.

W. 288.

Self-Exposure and Self-Surrender.

He who cannot rise above himself, who cannot, by his own consciousness, comprehend the kindling energy and solemn joy which pain or peril in a noble cause has often inspired—let him enlist under any standard rather than the cross. . . . This spirit of self-exposure and self-surrender throws into preachers an energy which no other principle can give. In truth, such power resides in disinterestedness, that no man can understand his full capacity of thought and feeling—his strength to do and suffer—until he gives himself, with a single heart, to a great and holy cause. New faculties seem to be created, and more than human might sometimes imparted, by a pure fervent love. Most of us are probably strangers to the resources of power in our own breasts, through the weight and pressure of the chains of selfishness. . No man is fitted to preach or promote Christianity, who is not fitted to die for it. . . The essence of Christianity is a spirit of martyrdom in the cause of mankind.

W. 268, 602.—*L.* 381.

The Allies.

A minister speaking not from selfish calculation, but giving out his mind in godly sincerity, uttering his convictions in natural tones, and always faithful to the light which he has received, however he may give occasional offence, will not speak in vain; he will have an ally in the moral sense, the principle of justice, the reverence for virtue, which is never wholly extinguished in the human soul. . . .

He is not alone. The mightiest energies in the universe are co-operating with him. He must blend himself with God's grand reconciling energies. . . .

Feel the greatness of your office. Feel that it associates you with the elect of past ages, with Jesus Christ, and apostles, and confessors, and martyrs, and reformers; with all who have toiled and suffered to raise men to intelligence and moral greatnesss; and let the consciousness of this spiritual brotherhood fortify you for like suffering and toil.

W. 288, 289.—*L.* 380.

The Future.

The Revolution Needed.

I see more and more distinctly, that society needs a revolution such as history nowhere records. *To rise above others* is the spirit and soul of society in its present constitution. But *to help others rise*, to use our superiority as the means of elevating those below, is the spirit of Christianity and humanity; and were it to prevail, it would make a revolution more striking than any conquest has made.

Channing-Aiken Correspondence, 122.

Brotherhood of the New Love.

But do we understand our spiritual Brotherhood? Do we feel ourselves to be derived from one Heavenly Parent, in whose image we are all made, and whose perfection we may constantly approach? Do we feel that there is one divine life in our own and in all souls? This seems to me the only true bond of man to man. . . .

A new reverence for man is essential to the cause of social reform. As long as men regard one another as they now do, that is as little better than the brutes, they will continue to treat one another brutally. Each will strive, by craft or skill, to make others his tools. There can be no spirit of brotherhood, no true peace, any further than men come to understand their affinity with and relation to God and the infinite purpose for which He gave them life. As yet these ideas are treated as a kind of spiritual romance; and the teacher who really expects men to see in themselves and one another the children of God, is smiled at as a visionary. The reception of this plainest truth of Christianity would revolutionize society, and create relations among men not dreamed of at the present day. A union would spring up, compared with which our present friendships would seem estrangements. Men would know the import of the word Brother, as yet nothing but a word to multitudes. None of us can conceive the change of manners, the new courtesy and sweetness, the mutual kindness, deference, and sympathy, the life and energy of efforts for social melioration, which are to spring up, in proportion as man shall penetrate beneath the body to the spirit, and shall learn what the lowest human being is. Then insults, wrongs, and oppressions, now hardly thought of, will give a deeper shock than we receive from crimes, which the laws punish with death. Then man will be sacred in man's sight; and to injure him will be regarded as open hostility towards God. . . . With this great truth in his heart a man cannot insult a fellow-man, for he beholds the Divine in the Human. He can call no being low in whom his own highest powers and affections are wrapped up. Can you conceive then of a truth so practical as this doctrine of the greatness of man as a moral being? It will create a New Earth. . . .

We need a New Revelation—not of Heaven or of Hell—but of the Spirit within ourselves.

W. 68, 7.—*P. L.* 53, 54.

"We live in glorious times."

Not that I think of repose; the longer I live, the more I have to do. We live in glorious times in one respect. Was there ever so much to do? Our age is a revolutionary one in the best sense of the word,—not of physical, but moral revolution. Higher ideas of the social state, and of human perfection, are at work. I shall not live to see the harvest, but to sow in faith is no mean privilege or happiness. (1838.)

I suppose I should pass for a wiser man, if I hoped less on most subjects. Wisdom is thought to be fearful,—an old woman with wrinkled, anxious brow. But under an empire of infinite goodness, it seems as rational to trust the signs of good as those of evil. I look more and more at the great laws of our own nature and of universal nature, and I am sure these are working for glorious results. . . . I never hoped so strongly and so patiently. (1841.)

L. 516, 606, 454.

The Prophecy.

The true reformation, I apprehend, is yet to come. . . . Listen to that deep discontent with the present forms of Christianity which is spreading in the community, which breaks out in murmurs,

now of scorn, now of grief, and which hungers and thirst for a new coming of the kingdom of God. . . . But a Better Day is coming. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. A purer Christianity, however slowly, is to take the place of that which bears but its name. Cannot we become the heralds of this better day? Let our hearts bid it welcome. Let our lives reveal its beauty and its power.

L. 640.—*W.* 290.—*P. L.* 79.

Mighty powers are at work in the world. Who can stay them? God's word has gone forth, and "it cannot return to him void." A new comprehension of the Christian spirit,—a new reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood, and of all men's relation to the common Father,—this is among the signs of our times. We see it; do we not feel it? Before this all oppresssions are to fall. Society, silently pervaded by this, is to change its aspect of universal warfare for peace. The power of selfishness, all-grasping and seemingly invincible, is to yield to this diviner energy. The song of angels, "On Earth Peace," will not always sound as fiction. O come, thou kingdom of Heaven, for which we daily pray! Come, Friend and Savior of the race, who didst shed thy blood on the cross to reconcile man to man, and earth to Heaven! Come, ye predicted ages of righteousness and love, for which the faithful have so long yearned! Come, Father Almighty, and crown with thine omnipotence the humble strivings of thy children to subvert oppression and wrong, to spread light and freedom, peace and joy, the truth and spirit of thy Son, through the whole earth!

W. 924. (His last words in public. Aug. 1, 1842.)

*** Published Semi-Monthly (except during July and August), by The Colegrove Book Co., 135, Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill. Ten copies or more to one address, each, 50 cts. a year. Single copy, one year, $1.00. Entered at the Chicago Post-Office as second-class matter.